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COMMONWEAL

RELIGIOUS BOOK ISSUE

BOOKS

PETER STEINFELS
on Jason Berry's 'Lead Us Not into Temptation'

DENNIS M. DOYLE
on Rembert Weakland's 'Faith and the Human Enterprise'

JANE REDMONT
on Mary Jo Weaver's 'Springs of Water in a Dry Land'

ROBERT P. IMBELLI
Are we all Christian ministers?

PAUL E. DINTER
on Opus Dei

EDWARD T. OAKES
on the English Reformation

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CORRESPONDENCE

Walk it off

Collegeville, Minn.

To the Editors: Having it both ways is what war comes down to for Christians who support or engage in it. As far as I know, there hasn't been a just war yet, and to act as if there could be one in reality is—for reasons all too obvious and even obscene—pussyfooting. "Much more work needs to be done on notions such as proportionality, last resort, the distinction between direct and indirect killing, etc.," says Stephen J. Pope ["You Can't Keep a Good Theory Down," February 12]. I'm loath to differ with a Pope, but with this one I must. Give it up, sir. If *La Civiltà Cattolica* can do it, so can you. Take long walks. That goes for the editor of *Commonweal* too—and the former editor.

J.F. POWERS

Church & slate

Walnut Creek, Calif.

To the Editors: Quoting, in its entirety, John Ashbery's poem:

THE CATHEDRAL IS
Slated for demolition.

Frank McConnell [January 29] finds the energy of the poem in the "irony" sparking between the grandiosity of the title and the "bathos" of what follows. He seems to have missed—or at least does not mention—the irony in the word "slated." Earlier the cathedral was slated (roofed) for preservation.

Let him who is without pun cast the first slate.

LEON LUKASZEWSKI

Whose side are you on?

Fayetteville, N.C.

To the Editors: When I subscribed to *Commonweal* it was my impression that I would find some intellectual relief from the unrelenting leftish propaganda of *America* magazine. I was disappointed but renewed my subscription after the election with the misguided hope that once the *bête noire* of the "Catholic" Left was voted out of office, your journal might return to issues that affect ordinary Catholic people. Again I see mostly elitist issues that have little relevance for a family struggling to maintain a semblance of moral values in an increasingly hostile environment.

Most Americans are not afflicted with AIDS and will never be touched by it, despite the media juggernaut launched to induce hysteria by the unholy alliance of Hollywood, academia, and the liberal "news" monopoly. Most Americans do not consider homosexuality anything more than it is—a dysfunctional perversion. On the abortion battlefield I note that Abigail McCarthy's column [February 12] expressed all sorts of concerns about Clinton but never mentioned that his first act was to make the destruction of the only truly oppressed and unprotected segment of our society much easier.

Ordinary Catholics need the church and those in positions of power or influence to join them against the ever-increasing tide of cultural barbarism. What we get are trendy discourses on "God is a she." The American Catholic family is in deep trouble. Seeing the rapid erosion of the values that have made America the greatest nation on earth, they have no champion or institution to articulate their views. To talk of sin or to cite biblical injunctions against abortion or homosexuality brands us as "religious fanatics" (words used one recent morning by Bryant Gumbel to describe Phyllis Schlafly). To suggest that it is somehow unnatural for little Johnny to come home and find "two mommies" or "two daddies" grappling with one another marks us as "intolerant," "bigots," or, more lately, "thugs."

On one side we have a brightly packaged amoral administration, the overweening power of the Hollywood moguls, the network pundits, the Ted Turners, the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, etc., and on the other we have....? Where is *Commonweal* in this war?

NORVELL B. DE ATKINE

Prospero año nuevo

Mexico City, December 21, 1992

To the Editors: I've never done anything like this before—write to an editor; in my life, this is a first. I don't even know if you'll ever read this, because editors are far-away people, like Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. And yet it's still important to me to write this letter.

At 5 P.M. today I took a coffee break from writing reports for guys who are asking for postulancy in our religious family (the Assumptionists). I picked up the copy of *Commonweal* that had just been brought in from our parish—we don't have direct mail in the part of town where our vocational center is located. I've been receiving the magazine for three or four years now. Unfortunately it hasn't been one of my regular readings, but I feel better when I have intelligent, nonclerical, faithfully Catholic, and challenging reading at my elbow. Your Christmas issue proves me right about my feelings and wrong for not reading the magazine more regularly.

The first three articles—"Luck," "Dewey," and "Lily"—did it for me. Later I read "Malcolm X" and, as I expected, it told me a lot about the Lord's Incarnation.

(Continued on page 29)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices. Copyright © 1993 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $36; Canada, $39; foreign, $41. Special two-year rate: U.S. $62; Canada, $66; foreign, $72. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design, Emil Antonucci; p. 7, Baloo, Rothco; pp. 8, 26, Paul Valerry; p. 14, Stowell, Rothco; p. 18, Harrison, Rothco; pp. 20, 28, Ross, Rothco; p. 30, Les Barton, Rothco.

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COMMONWEAL

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Now for the hard part

Regardless of where one stands on the best way to reduce the $4-trillion federal debt and present $300-billion annual budget deficits, it was hard not to be impressed by the boldness and (yes) vision of President Bill Clinton's February 17 budget address to Congress. In calling for a five-year, $250-billion tax increase, Clinton offered the nation a clear and dramatic description of our predicament and an ambitious prescription for a cure. "If we do not act now," Clinton warned, "we will not recognize this country ten years from now. Ten years from now, the deficit will have grown to $634 billion a year; the national debt will be almost 80 percent of our gross national product."

Unabashedly, Clinton wants to reverse the *laissez-faire* approach to governing promulgated by Ronald Reagan. Indeed, he told the American people that he "came here to accept responsibility for the future of this country." One suspects that more than anything else, this eagerness to take responsibility for the direction of domestic policy won for the new president the good will reflected in the 70 percent approval ratings in the polls following the speech.

In making his case, Clinton ingeniously reshaped the telegenic habits of former President Reagan and put them to his own purposes. Borrowing Reagan's rhetoric of economic opportunity, family values, and faith in America and the future, the new president urged a fundamental "change in direction." Taxes will go up, especially on the wealthiest, but also across the board for energy consumption. Government will help create jobs, especially for the most disadvantaged. Military spending, sacrosanct for the last decade, will now bear the brunt of federal spending cuts. Health costs will be contained, and the most affluent Social Security beneficiaries will be taxed more. Government, according to Clinton, must act.

After twelve years of lectures about the inexorable logic of the "market," it is good to hear a president recognize the fact that economics is fundamentally about people, not prices or goods. Contrary to the doctrinaire convictions of those on either the Left or the Right, economic life is not governed by any immutable natural laws. Like all social institutions, economic relations reflect what we, as human beings and free moral agents, choose to value. And in this regard, it was heartening to hear a president passionately endorse every person's right to a job and to a living wage. "We believe in jobs, we believe in learning, and we believe in rewarding work," Clinton said. "There is dignity in all work, and there must be dignity for all workers....We will help reward work for millions of working poor Americans. Our new direction aims to realize a principle as powerful as it is simple: If you work full time, you should not be poor."

In a country as blessed with resources as ours, and in one where hard work has indeed created remarkable wealth, surely the idea that all work should be rewarded

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with dignity is something to which Americans at long last can say Amen.

That said, whether Clinton and his fellow Democrats in Congress can build constructively on the good will generated by his speech remains to be seen. Even those sympathetic to the general tenor of Clinton's plan were made nervous by the idea of "front loading" the tax hike and the $190 billion in stimulus and "public investment" spending while postponing the bulk of deficit reduction until 1997. While the final shape of the package remains to be decided, it now appears that spending cuts will be voted on, at least tentatively, before the tax increases. Whether this procedural change represents a substantive or merely symbolic shift in emphasis is the question.

Increasing taxes on the nation's wealthiest 2 percent is not a great political risk. But in raising taxes and increasing spending, the Democrats do risk forgetting that no deficit reduction program will succeed unless the spiraling costs of entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are contained. Even if Clinton's proposal succeeds in bringing the deficit down into the $200-billion range, projected health-care costs will begin to pull the deficit up again after 1996. And even with a significant upturn in the economy, it is hard to imagine how health-care costs will be managed over the long haul without further increases in taxes.

Admittedly, there are prudent economic as well as political reasons for waiting before administering the harshest medicine. A too ambitious deficit-reduction plan might throw the economy back into recession. Clinton's hope is that his spending stimulus will strengthen growth so that a prospering economy can smoothly accommodate the subsequent tax burden. For the moment, even the Federal Reserve's conservative chairman Alan Greenspan has endorsed this idea. But it remains a gamble.

Neither should Democrats interpret the public's support for Clinton's plan as a reawakening of faith in big government spending programs that merely lay dormant during the Reagan era. Whether this administration is able to pursue its broader political goals on behalf of the poor, the uninsured, and the unemployed still depends on the effectiveness of the over-all deficit-reduction scheme. That means the Democrat-controlled Congress will have to impose "sacrifices" on constituents that most observers frankly think Congress is incapable of enacting into law. But without real spending cuts, it seems a certainty the debt will continue to hamstring the economy, stagnating middle- and working-class incomes. If that happens, the voters once again will judge the Democrats to be fiscally irresponsible. The best way to avoid that fate, of course, is for Congress to pursue even deeper spending cuts than Clinton proposed.

So a word of caution is in order, even from those most sympathetic to the progressive social policies Clinton seeks to fund. Ross Perot is waiting in the wings. So are Jack Kemp and Pat Buchanan. Democrats should be leery of a return to what might have worked in the past. The complex and interdependent global economy requires something different. In his emphasis on coupling taxes with spending cuts, and on education, job training, and cooperation between government and private industry, the president has laid out a plausible plan and pointed the nation in the right direction. But the proof will be in the pudding of deficit reduction, not in the appetizers of federal jobs and social programs.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

THE WORST OF THE 'TIMES'

SOME NEWS DOESN'T FIT

To the surprise of many and the dismay of some, New York City's Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez is a goner; in mid-February the central school board voted 4-3 not to renew his contract. The *New York Times* appears to have been the most surprised (and dismayed) of all. Was the *Times* caught off guard because it spent too much time reading itself and too little time gathering the news? Because the *Times* is both the daily bulletin board and the cultural expression of a political class that plays such a powerful role in both my city and the nation, that question is especially troubling.

Though Fernandez's ouster may be a small footnote in the history of the culture wars, it is likely to be a serious loss for the city's schools and school children. And in my opinion it was a loss that didn't have to happen.

High hopes for Fernandez's mandate to reform the schools first ran into trouble in 1990. First, he introduced a condom distribution program in the high schools as part of an AIDS prevention effort. Then he refused to include a parental opt-out for those who objected.

Further trouble came this autumn with the Rainbow Curriculum (see editorial, January 15, 1993). The laudable effort to teach and encourage tolerance in the public schools floundered on advice to first-grade teachers to inculcate the lesson that same-sex couples were as much normal families as the standard heterosexual model and to include references to gays and lesbians throughout the curriculum. Once again, Mr. Fernandez dismissed the objections of parents.

As a close reader of New York's premier newspaper, I had been astonished at the *Times*'s consistent inattention to the objections raised by parents in both cases; by its unfair treatment of school board members who are Catholic; and by its inability to stand back from its progay editorial position and simply report the news. In this case, what political and business leaders didn't learn from the *Times*, really did hurt. They were "uninformed" by the paper of record about the conflict itself, the nature of the debate, and the state of public opinion. They were given a very partial if not highly distorted impression of the kind of people opposed to teaching first graders about gays and lesbians and to handing out condoms to thirteen-year-olds. Staunch supporters of Fernandez and his school reform program (as was I), they vastly underestimated the opposition to

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his forays into sexual/social issues. Had they known, it is hard not to think that they would have done what New Yorkers usually do when such conflicts erupt—compromise and urge the man they imported from Miami to fix the schools to do so as well.

Not only did the *Times* "uninform" us, its news coverage displayed an animus that can only be called anti-Catholic, starting with an inability to treat religious objections to homosexuality or homosexual conduct as other than bigotry, and proceeding from there. Opponents of the Rainbow Curriculum, including some Catholics, some Orthodox Jews, some African-American protestants, and some Hispanic evangelicals, were dismissed as members or tools of the Religious Right. Dr. Irene Impellizzeri, one of the school board members, was designated by a *Times* news story "a voice for the Catholic hierarchy." Ninfa Segarra's religious affiliation (Catholic) was often noted—as was her Mass attendance at Saint Patrick's—but not that of any other board member, even the other two who ultimately voted against Fernandez. Presumably they are not Catholic. It was also duly and regularly recorded that members of District 24, the local school board in Queens that vociferously rejected the Rainbow Curriculum, were Catholic, although the religious affiliations of other local boards, many of whom had some objections to the curriculum, were never mentioned. The *Times* rarely fails to note that Catholic lay people have views of their own on a range of sexual issues—including homosexuality. Apparently, we show ourselves capable of thinking for ourselves only when we disagree with the hierarchy—and agree with the *Times*. When we don't, we are mindless puppets of Cardinal O'Connor and Brooklyn's Bishop Daily.

In the case of condom distribution in the high schools, gay and lesbians in the first-grade curriculum, and—most important—the responsibilities of fair and full news coverage, it strikes me that it's the *Times* that should worry about mindlessness and puppetry.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

MEMO TO HRC

CONTROLLING HEALTH COSTS MAKE IT PERSONAL

I have a great family physician. During a routine physical, we discussed whether or not I should receive boosters for measles and tetanus. We discussed the medical reasons for and against getting the boosters, concluding that the boosters were not necessary. Then he added his financial concerns. "I have to be careful," he said, "in how I recommend treatment. If I casually recommend to a thousand of my patients that they receive booster vaccinations, at $25 or $30 a pop, I've just spent $25,000 or $30,000. I don't feel comfortable spending money like that."

His medical practice is exemplary in involving patients. The office brochure flatly encourages patients to call the office, in all but traumatic emergencies, before going to a hospital emergency room. "Please call our office first. We can often save you money by addressing your concerns on the phone." In one daytime but after-office-hours emergency, I got an appointment on fifteen minutes' notice: "Come in right now." Routine office visits are so reasonably priced that I gladly pay for them to get high-quality care. (How does $20 for a quick visit sound?) He and his staff of physicians and physician assistants strive to give thorough care. "Please take your time," one said. "In this practice we believe in spending time with patients and answering their questions." His staff returns phone calls. Get this: the receptionist phones you when the staff are running behind so you don't come in and have to wait. Sound like Oz? It's not. It's a medical practice in a black, working-class, West Philadelphia neighborhood bordering on the mostly white University City neighborhood surrounding the University of Pennsylvania.

In my experience few physicians keep the cost of their treatment in mind. Yet this family practice not only gives great care, it gives affordable care. It does so precisely because its owners think about costs.

Significantly, the office brochure stresses that providing good health care is a partnership: Don't abuse the opportunity to reach physicians by phone. Call the office if you are going to be late. If you can't pay the fees, talk to us. We can keep our fees low only if you work with us. The current crisis in domestic health care, as it is often styled, is treated as a problem of numbers, whether it be the number of people in the United States who are uninsured or the number of dollars by which health-care costs rise annually. Assuredly, the health-care situation is complex and includes issues such as terminal care, AIDS, tuberculosis, multiple organ transplants, drug abuse, infinite expectations, and so on. Looming behind these megaproblems, however, are the increasing cost and declining accessibility of primary care, the care most families are concerned about. A patient who spends $100 for a minimal, routine office visit and leaves without all his or her questions being answered has experienced a failure in medical care. My concern is that the high cost of primary care drives away consumers: mothers do without prenatal care; babies suffer malnutrition; children are not vaccinated. You can expand this list easily and endlessly.

I submit that the problem of poor primary care may lie in the structural relationship between patients and health-care providers, and that it may be more effective to probe this relationship and to change our behavior accordingly than it would be to simply overhaul the insurance system. For it is the current relationship between patients and health-care providers that goes a long way to inflate the high cost of health care.

Medical providers, who are mostly physicians, do not sufficiently internalize the cost of health care. The owners in the medical practice I described above choose to internalize it: "I don't feel comfortable spending money like that." It is clear to me that my doctor believes deeply in providing good, af-

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fordable health care. But his commitment is a matter of the spirit. It cannot be produced simply by legislation or insurance reform. Thus, I acknowledge that I am making a radical suggestion in calling for health-care providers to watch their costs. However, like most matters of behavior, cost-consciousness in medical care can be taught by example. A handful of instructors in each medical school, and a handful of attending physicians and chief residents, could ignite a spiritual transformation. Despite arguments that medical students leave medical school shackled with debt, I think the real obstacle is the I-work-damn-hard-and-deserve-a-big-salary culture which encourages a self-centered, cost-blind attitude among physicians.

Nor do patients sufficiently internalize the cost of their care. The costs are hidden, to a large extent, by medical insurance itself. Seeing an insurance confirmation that a provider has accepted a $700 payment for a $1,000 MRI bill doesn't hit you in the gut. It ought to: you are paying for it indirectly.

I think that a minor change in health insurance might effectively help patients to internalize a sense of the costs of medical care. I propose that there be a modest copayment for all treatment, a minimum percentage of the total cost, and that such payments would be capped. This modest reform would at once give all patients the incentive to seek less expensive care, and it would bring providers into the free market. How so? Today's typical copayment, if any, is a flat, nominal charge. A flat charge may keep insurance rates down but it does not provide encouragement to the patient to seek the least expensive treatment. In other words, if costs pinched a little, patients might start asking questions and considering alternatives. If costs are diffuse, one's recourse is to complain; if costs pinch, one's recourse is to relieve the pinching. If the patient pays a flat charge, whether the treatment costs $50 or $125, he or she has not internalized the cost of the treatment.

Now consider this alternative. Suppose insurance companies required a 10 percent copayment with a $5 minimum and a $50 cap. A $50 treatment would cost $5, a $125 treatment, $12.50. Already there's an incentive to shop around. Hospitals, medical labs, x-ray facilities, all would face a transformed market. In such a new market, consumers (the patients) would have a self-interest in finding the least expensive provider. And as sure as day follows night, some providers would compete on the basis of cost. Quality, reliability, convenience, proximity, and urgency, all would be factors in purchasing medical services, just as they are now in other purchasing decisions. Currently, the cost-factor is too often absent in medical considerations, and this in turn is a major factor in runaway health costs.

By restructuring insurance, providers might be forced to become more accountable to the buying public. Each provider would make the costs of treatment more visible (and palpable) by virtue of the copayment. And patients might become more cognizant of their responsibility, or at least coresponsibility with their physicians, for keeping costs down. But mutual responsibility for holding down health-care costs only begins here. Physicians must be trained to routinely ask: Is the money for this treatment well spent? And we patients can ask our providers questions, thereby raising their consciousness: How much will this cost me? Why does treatment X cost so much? Is there a cheaper provider? Is there a generic substitute? Do I really need this treatment anyway? Do you have any direct or beneficial interest in the treatment you are ordering?

I am well aware that this brief proposal may be attacked from all sides. I hear the paper tigers growling: "The health-care crisis is not so simple." True, but sometimes we tend to make our problems too complex. Recognizing that apples are apples and not pears, and that there are going to be a variety of changes in health care in the coming decade, it is reasonable to suggest that it would benefit physicians and patients alike if we would jointly take responsibility for keeping costs in check. Raising the consciousness of physicians and patients, coupled with a small structural change in health insurance, might be a significant step in the transformation of health care in America.

JEREMIAH P. REILLY

Jeremiah P. Reilly, a writer and illustrator, holds a master's degree in applied economics from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

RELIGIOUS WARS...
AND RELIGIOUS PEACE

The headline in the *New York Times* on February 12 drew little notice as far as I can tell. It read "Pope's Trip: New Crusade" and topped a story by reporter Alan Cowell. The story compressed into one column an admirably succinct review of the shift in the role of religion since the end of the cold war and did so in the context of Pope John Paul's recent trip to Africa.

The story came to the somewhat surprising conclusion that the pope "seeks to redefine religious diversity as a positive force capable of drawing on shared values" in a world where temporal politics have failed. This evidently is the "new crusade" of the headline. Never mind that Cowell uses the *caveat* that there is much historical evidence to the contrary and that in a later story (February 24) he emphasized only the pope's stiff denunciation of the Muslim oppression of Christians in the Sudan. He has sounded the hopeful note that the pope has a vision of religions united for peace and justice. And holds that vision in a world riven by religious conflict.

The common view is that religion tied to ethnicity is tearing the post-cold war world apart. Indeed in terms of world

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order that is a fact: neighbors of different faiths battle each other in India, in the Middle East, in Azerbaijan, in what was Yugoslavia, in Northern Ireland. In some places the conflicts can be ages old, in others like Bosnia and Herzegovina they were revived, it seems, only yesterday. But religious hatreds are so pervasive that it hardly seems possible that a new spirituality could fill the void left by the collapse of communism. Yet this is the aim of the pope's new crusade.

In this spirit he called together the ecumenical gathering in Assisi in January in an effort to seek a united statement from Balkan religious leaders. (Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina answered the call but the Serbian Orthodox did not.) For his part the pope has spoken frequently in defense of the rights of Muslims in Bosnia, although less emphatically than ecumenists might wish.

In a mysterious way the new spirituality for which the pope hopes and prays—"the only struggle which religions can justify....The moral struggle against man's disordered passions, against every kind of hatred and violence" (address in the Sudan)— may be welling up from the grassroots and spreading unheralded outside of formal religious channels.

In his *Christianity and Democracy*, the French philosopher Jacques Maritain held that, despite the religious wars and persecutions pursued in the name of Christianity, the tenets of Christianity had in the course of history worked like a leaven in society and resulted in the rise of democracy. Democratic ideals—equality, justice, help for the downtrodden, sacrifice for the common good—stemmed from the gospel. (He would hold the same today, I believe, to explain the astonishing charity and self-sacrifice of the relief workers in international trouble spots from secular agencies like the French, Doctors without Borders, and the Irish group, Concern.)

In much the same way, and unnoticed by the media, a worldwide ecumenical network of believers has risen from the Bosnian village of Medjugorje to assuage the world's suffering. Medjugorje, of course, is the site of the purported appearances of the Blessed Virgin during the past eleven years. During that time hundreds of thousands from all parts of the world thronged Medjugorje despite the fact that, unlike the report of visionaries at some other shrines, the Virgin at Medjugorje promised and performed no miracles of healing and spoke only of peace, reconciliation, and change of heart. Whether we accept the visions or not, we have to concede that the effect on those who do so is remarkable.

The village, for example, which had been cut off by the flare-up of hostilities in Bosnia, was "liberated" and reopened in June by a march of believers from thirty countries. According to journalist Peggy Stanton, they braved a possible aerial attack from the Serbs as they marched ten miles from Ljubulski to Saint James Church in Medjugorje. What had been almost a ghost town was once again a place of pilgrimage and prayers for peace.

"A holy war?—Boy, have they got a lot of nerve!"

That is remarkable enough, perhaps, but what is more interesting is the proliferation of peace centers founded by those affected by Medjugorje and the relief efforts they organize and sponsor. From the beginning the visionaries at Medjugorje have been somewhat unusual in their insistence that following Mary's words on peace, conversion, prayer, and fasting will lead to practical good works and that ecumenical reconciliation will be one of the fruits of her message. The message, they say, is meant for all religions, all nations.

The resultant good works are exemplified in peace centers like the Pilgrim's Peace Center in Clearwater, Florida, and Hope, Inc., in Washington, D.C., which send money and goods for the relief of those suffering in the Balkans. One of the most interesting is the Medjugorje Appeal, founded by British steel executive Bernard Ellis. To date this appeal has sent $500,000 in cash and $2.5 million in food, clothing, and supplies.

In an interview with the *National Catholic Register* (February 14) Ellis said, "The aid sent through Medjugorje reaches everyone, regardless of nationality or religion. It's a witness to the reality of Medjugorje that people whose lives have been changed there now have this burning desire to help alleviate the suffering. It's one of the spiritual fruits."

The Medjugorje Appeal of Great Britain attracts help from interestingly varied sources. Bernard Ellis himself is a former Orthodox Jew who converted to Catholicism after having visited Medjugorje. He appealed to the horse racing establishment for help with transport this last Christmas and was inundated by trainers and breeders offering horse boxes (trucks) for that purpose. Lord Huntingdon, the Queen's horse trainer, himself drove a load of Christmas gifts, blankets, toys, and glucose across Europe to Bosnia.

In this country an even more heartening effort is in the making. Fundraising for the violated women of Bosnia and their babies has been launched by peace centers in Washington, D.C., and Virginia. In addition to a concert they plan "mighty mite" coffers across America—each raising $10—and they hope to raise $10 million in all. Not only is the leadership ecumenical but it brings together pro-choice and prolife women. The honorary chairs are Charlotte Conable, wife of the former World Bank president, who has worked with Planned Parenthood, and Mercedes Wilson, pioneering founder of Natural Family Planning. They will use the money to provide psychological and financial help for the abused Muslim women and to arrange adoption for their babies if necessary.

Can we discern here some of the campaigners in the new crusade? □

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THE NEW CATECHISM

A FIRST READING

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

In the church, considered as a social organism, mysteries inevitably degenerate into beliefs.
—Simone Weil.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has its origins in an intervention made by Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1985. The synod's task was to reflect on the impact of Vatican II twenty years after its closing. Cardinal Law opined that it was time for a catechism that would set out, and clearly explain, the entire body of authentic Catholic teaching. Law's suggestion reflected a need expressed by many in the hierarchy for some standard account of the faith in the somewhat tumultuous period following on Vatican II.

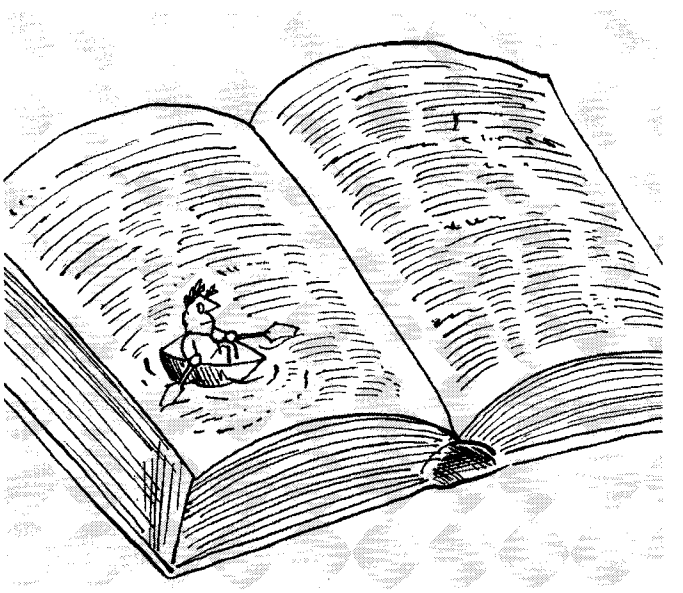
That same suggestion for a universal catechism had been debated at Vatican I but the assembled bishops never came to a decision to order such a text. It is instructive to go back and read the conciliar discussions of the time since they also reflected worries not unlike those voiced by some critics of the current project. In our day, however, the synod adopted, and Pope John Paul II approved, a recommendation that such a catechism be written.

In 1986, the pope named a commission of senior prelates, under the direction of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, to supervise its writing. The actual writing committee, under Cardinal Ratzinger's direction, consisted of seven of the world's bishops who had catechetical expertise. That writing group, in turn, consulted (selected) theologians from around the world. After a number of preliminary drafts were produced, a provisional text was sent in late 1989 *sub secreto* to the world's hierarchy with instructions that emendations, corrections, etc. be forwarded to Rome by late spring, 1990.

The provisional draft was a great clot of a document with many stylistic and structural problems. There was also considerable dissatisfaction with the theological tenor of parts of the text. Thousands of suggestions poured into Rome from both individual bishops and their corporate bodies. A team of American theologians, privy to the text, did a not-always-flattering study of the provisional draft which was later published under the title *The Universal Catechism Reader: Reflections and Responses*, edited by Thomas Reese, S.J. (HarperCollins, 1990) to which the current writer contributed.

The reactions sent to Rome were such that the targeted publication date in late 1990, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing of the council, was clearly impossible. Since Rome thought that the substance of the draft was sound, the suggested scrapping of the entire project coming from some quarters was never given serious consideration. The final rewrite of the catechism took over two years. After close scrutiny by Cardinal Ratzinger and the pope (who, it is said, went over it meticulously), the catechism was first published in French (the working language of the writing group) in November 1992: *Catéchisme de L'Eglise Catholique* (Mame/Plon). Other translations are scheduled to appear in 1993 with an *editio typica* in Latin to be issued before the year is out.

Pope John Paul's apostolic constitution *Fidei depositum*, October 11, 1992 (marking the thirtieth anniversary of the open-



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ing of Vatican II), officially promulgated the catechism. That document provides an authoritative indication of how the catechism is to be understood. The catechism (also called a "compendium" or a "reference text" or, more poetically, a "symphony" of the faith) is to present the belief and practice(s) of the Catholic church "faithfully" and "organically." Its designated primary audience is the Catholic episcopate and, from them, to those charged with catechetical ministry under the guidance of the bishops. The pope further notes that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms pertinent to the needs of the local church.

Structurally, the catechism patterns itself after the *Roman Catechism* which had been produced after the sixteenth-century Council of Trent. Using a time-honored distinction based on creed, sacrament, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer (Luther's small catechism, like the *Roman Catechism*, follows this division), there are four large sections in the new book: The Profession of Faith (based loosely on the Apostles' Creed); The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (the sacraments); Life in Christ (the Ten Commandments); and Prayer (with an extended commentary on the Lord's Prayer). This division has its remote origin in the early medieval period when it was stipulated (for example, by the Carolingian reformers) that Christians at the very least should be able to recite the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the names of the sacraments, and the Lord's Prayer. From that list of essentials, commentaries were produced over the centuries.

The actual text of the present catechism is divided into discrete numbered paragraphs. In smaller print there follows, after many of the paragraphs, either citations from the theological tradition or sacred Scripture or descriptions of the history of a certain practice or lesser practices of the church; indulgences for example, get the small-print treatment. Finally, there are scattered throughout the text boxed statements that briefly summarize the main points of the previous discussion in the paragraphs. These pithy summaries are meant for catechists to memorize (a daunting task since there are, by my count, 550 of them!) and/or utilize in their teaching. Each of the discrete sections (statements, small-print excursuses, and catechetical summary sentences) are numbered consecutively for a total of 2,865 entries, exclusive of the appendices containing citation sources and a glossary of terms.

When compared to the provisional text of 1990, the most significant changes are found in the structure. The earlier version was much choppier with its 4,126 paragraphs; it also studded the small-print sections with sources in Latin (these have all been eliminated). There also seems to have been a rather complete rewrite of the fourth section on prayer, and substantial rewrites of other sections.

One further advance over the provisional text is that there was an honest attempt in the translation for the United States to use inclusive language in its references to human persons. Cardinal Law's letter of December 4, 1992, accompanying the final draft to the American bishops calls this a "moderate approach." I take it as a great advance over the provisional text and the translator should be praised for his fidelity in executing the expressed desire of so many bishops for inclusive language.

The text with which I worked (that sent to the American bishops, again, *sub secreto*—why?) did not have the glossary of terms (earlier samples I have seen from the provisional text indicate that they are only of a lexical character) nor a complete index of sources cited in the body of the text (I have the one for the French edition), but my best guess is that the entire volume will amount to well over six hundred pages. The French version comes to 676 pages and does not include the glossary promised for the English edition.

If one follows the intention of the authors that it be read "as a whole," one is in for a long read. It took me the better part of two days to go once through the catechism in a careful manner. I then went back and read selectively the cross references provided in the margin that sent the reader to cognate paragraphs. Finally, I checked selectively the English translation against the French published version. It is from that first but careful reading that these remarks come.

What general impression does the catechism make?

Since it is impossible for me to comment at length on specific parts of the document, let me make a few general observations.

First, and this is a criticism I made about the provisional draft, the use of the old fourfold division of the text into creed, sacraments, ethics, and prayer is not a pedagogically useful one. It does not permit that "organic" quality intended by the authors and promised by the catechism itself. Indeed, there is evidence in the text itself that the authors understand the problem since, in places, it either warns the reader that a given topic will be taken up in a different fashion at a different place or it cites in the margins other areas to read in order to get a fuller picture of a given topic. One can make steady use of these marginal cross references but that requires a lot of flipping around in the text. The catechism reads not like a book but like a breviary.

One does not have to read far to see how compartmentalized the catechism is. The affirmation of belief in God (#200 ff.) would be a logical place to reflect on the problem of atheism and agnosticism but those topics get treated under the commandments (#2123 ff.). Nor is there any possibility of sustained reflection on the obligation to worship in the creedal section on belief in God since it gets treated variously both under the sacramental life and under the discussion of the First Commandment. Any writer of a new local original catechism will have to struggle with this awkwardness in order to obtain anything like an "organic" presentation of the faith. If such organization is not done, the general impression gained is that of facticity, not of organic unity.

Secondly, the catechism is very traditional both in its approach and in its suppositions. It would be unfair to expect such a document to be on the "cutting edge" of theological speculation but it would have been helpful to have taken into account some genuine contributions of contemporary theology. Apart from

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some citations from Vatican II and utterances of the recent pontiffs, no theologian after John Henry Newman ever gets cited; not even those who like De Lubac, Congar, Rahner, now enjoy something like canonical status in the tradition. No Protestant thinker is cited (the ecumenical character of this volume is thin) and from the older theological tradition there are exactly fifteen allusions to the contributions of women writers or saints.

The theology of the catechism is conservative. That should come as no surprise since such a document *should* be conservative but it does, *pace* its apologists, represent a very definite way of thinking theologically. It reflects the kind of theology that emanates from the circle of writers connected to *Communio* and is very unlike that found in the pages of *Concilium*. One senses echoes of the theological approach of the late Hans Urs von Balthasar and, not, say, of Karl Rahner. The catechism's approach to Christology, mariology, and ecclesiology is "high." How much richer those great themes would have been had they been dialectically linked with liberation theology's emphasis on the solidarity of Jesus with the poor, with the liberating theme of Mary's *Magnificat*, and the transforming power of the local community gathered to celebrate Word and Sacrament.

There is no evidence that contemporary biblical criticism has made any impact on the catechism's formulation. The discussion of the life of Christ, for instance, relies on a harmony of the Gospels that does some justice to the mysteries of Christ as it unfolds in the liturgical year but none to biblical insights produced in the last half century. The section on the Bible opens with an emphasis on the traditional primacy of the literal sense and goes on to talk about the equally traditional three spiritual senses. That exposition of the way to read Scripture is hallowed in the tradition but unmindful of more nuanced approaches to the Bible. There is no extended acknowedgment of biblical hermeneutics and no reference to the revival of biblical studies in the modern world. I missed any citation, for example, of Pius XII's encyclical on biblical renewal, the 1943 *Divino afflante spiritu*. By and large, the Bible tends to get used either in a sapiential manner after the fashion of the liturgy (not in itself a bad thing) or in the manner of a proof text.

The anthropology of the catechism is not always a comfortable admixture of personalism and hierarchy.The role of women in the church marks little advance beyond *Küche, Kinder, und Kirche*: no female servers at the altar, please, and only men in the priesthood. Only lay men can advance to the permanent state of lector and reader (#903; repeating the Code of Canon Law). There is no mention in the catechism, even in small print, of deaconesses in the early church. Curiously, the catechism recognizes that the Holy Women were the first witnesses to the Resurrection (#640) but explains in the next paragraph (#641) that the male witnesses "remain the foundation stone of the church" without alluding to the Holy Women who were the first proclaimers of the Risen Lord.

The section on ethics is predictable on the issues of abortion, contraception, etc., but that comes as no surprise. I found it sad that the catechism provides no consolation to the divorced and remarried beyond telling them to be faithful to the church while denying them access to the Communion rail. In general, the whole orientation of the section on morality has little room for, or pays little attention to, human experience (despite the "new" sins, so played up in the popular press) but much space for law and command.

In fairness, the opening section on ethics, with the strong formulation on Christian personalism (the hand of John Paul II is all over this section) is quite good, as are the sections on social justice and human community; but the specifics of the section on morality will cause, I suspect, some vigorous comment among the moralists.

The general tone of the catechism is one of serene security. Only twice in the entire catechism is there—in small print observations (#853 and #2298)—any admission of human failings in the church. This is most definitely a work of the teaching church (*ecclesia docens*) with scant attention to the learning church (*ecclesia discens*); in fact, the distinction is not directly acknowledged. Little appeal is made either to human expe-

Pamela Gross

At the March Equinox

A sense of waiting—as if
for the match to be struck—so strong,
we imagine an odor of sulphur.
Headhigh thickets of salmonberry
flanking the trail's start might already
have struck their matchstick stems
against flint. Leaflets flare,
the closest green can ever come to
flame, and every visible inhabitant
near its flashpoint: Blaze
of the Audubon warbler's raised yellow jack;
seethe of skunk cabbages' oiled lamps.
A hummingbird's buzz raddles
the dense wickerwork, his breastplate
blinking the *Stay Back*!
Gorget's char, roused to an orange-red
coal, dims then fans again. Febrile,
this green glaze on shoulder, crown
of maple, alder. More
suggestion than color, as if echo
dared to anticipate its word.
Blade, bud, sepal, petal, leaf.
We have wished for something like this
to happen to us. Habit,
released from its winterdrab.
If we are lucky, a burning
that manages also to
salve, to heal.

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rience or to history except, in the latter case, to treat gingerly the evolution of doctrine.

The greatest fear of some people is that the catechism will be used as a canonical club by restorationist-minded folks to shape all future catechetical material according to its method and its message. Will this be the case? It well might be but only the future will tell as we watch to see how the catechism is received by the various churches in the world.

What does strike me as a crucial issue is one which those who are in Christian education will face. The real problem is that there is widespread illiteracy in the church and no acceptable comprehensive statement of belief that would act as a remedy for that illiteracy nor a comprehensive strategy to aid in its elimination. Those who lament the demise of the *Baltimore Catechism* in this country have some cause for their sadness as will anyone who teaches—as I do every semester—young people who are frightfully intelligent but woefully undernourished in basic information about their faith. This compendium is good on information but not so good on context and woeful in its pedagogy. The issue, then, is this: Will this catechism be an aid for catechetical instruction and, if so, how?

There are many good resources in this work but the sheer bulk of material will make it, at best, a reference work for those who want to mine snippets (after the manner of the older theologies that relied on the classic texts of Denziger's anthology to proof-text positions) or only pay lip service to it. Most people would not have the energy or enthusiasm to read it in its entirety. I could not imagine giving it, say, as a text to university students because its format is so unappetizingly dogmatic and abstract. It desperately needs a prophetic edge to its prose and a narrative style that would relieve its unremittingly plodding assertiveness. It is, alas, the work of intelligent clerical theologians (did any lay persons have a hand in its formulation?) written for the higher clergy with an eye on Rome and not on the faithful of the world.

Can the enormous amount of work put into this catechism be put to good use? I think so. While working on the text I paid particular attention to the 550 short statements (in the boxes) which were designed to serve immediate catechetical needs. They are of varying importance but usually touch on the essentials. They are also the only way the catechism acts to indicate that there is, as Vatican II says, a "hierarchy of truths" in the church. It is fascinating to see what the authors see as essential enough to put in these sections.

One strategy might be to isolate those statements, correlate them so as to overcome the creed/sacrament/morality dichotomy of the larger text, and see if they would serve as a coherent frame for a smaller, more useful catechesis of the faith that would be comprehensive but not overwhelming. By using those statements as a base and reworking them into a more acceptable style, a more realistic work might be produced. If they were simply pulled out as they stand and reproduced as they appear

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(I have tried that with some of them) they would not add up to a compelling text.

Any catechism based on this compendium should be radically shorter than the present one. It should be written in a more accessible style and, more importantly, it should take into account the concrete reality of people's lives. It would be possible, for instance, to write a coherent short Christology from the short affirmations and illustrate them with selections from people whose deepest reflections might resonate with authentic religious experience; let us have more Dorothy Day or Flannery O'Connor or Gerard Manley Hopkins and fewer papal allocutions. Let us also have the Jesus who has been retrieved by liberation theology, historical critics, and our contemporary contemplatives.

Other strategies might well suggest themselves but a successful approach must reflect the actual condition in which most people live today. The current catechism is not anchored in anything like real life. It has an air—partially intended I suspect—of the timeless about it. With a television set on six hours a day in the average household and the human imagination fueled by the visual, it simply will not do to write in an unvisual assertive style.

Such a catechism must also avoid the olympian tone of the self-assured teacher. It does not strike me as impossible to say definite things about what we believe as Christians while, at the same time, giving some sense that we struggle to articulate the deep mystery of our faith, its paradoxical nature, and the challenges of a pluralistic world. One recent commentator has said that the catechism now has the authority of a magisterial document of the teaching church. One could hardly quarrel with that judgment but the question before us is how teachable is the audience the catechism hopes to persuade and what strategy is to be utilized in that teaching?

Tucked into a small print section of the new catechism (#1676) is a wonderful description of the Catholic wisdom of the common people that does justice to the human and the divine; to Christ and his mother; spirit and body; communion and institution; person and community; faith and homeland; intelligence and emotion. That wisdom, the catechism rightly says, is a kind of humanism that "radically affirms the dignity of every person as a child of God, establishes a basic fraternity, teaches people how to encounter nature and understand work, and provides reasons for joy and humor even in the midst of a very hard life."

That small paragraph could well serve as an invitation and challenge to any writer of a catechism who would use the new compendium. It is one of the few places in the entire document that comes close to real life. It may be the only Roman document which ever uttered the word *humor*. It energetically encapsulates the full vision of Pope John Paul II without the turgidity of the *stylus curialis*. It also recognizes the *vox populi*. Let that be the deep background of any attempt to write a statement of faith that would do justice to the need for an intelligent presentation of the authentic faith (and there is a crying need for such a statement) while taking into account that we are dealing with real people who live real lives.

At Christmas of 1961, Pope John XXIII issued an apostolic constitution (*Humanae salutis*) announcing the opening of Vatican II for 1962. In that document the pope said that the authentic doctrine of the church should be studied and expounded through methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought; he then added: "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing and the way it is presented is another." Exactly. This catechism gives us one vision of the substance of the faith (and much more) but, alas, we will need further, more strenuous, efforts to present that substance in any way close to the vision set out by the pontiff in 1961.

It will be a daunting task. Centuries ago Martin Luther, no mean writer of catechisms, said: "One ought to regard those teachers as the best and paragons of their profession those who present the catechism well...but such teachers are rare birds. For there is neither great glory nor outward show in their kind of teaching; but there is in it great good and also the best of sermons, because in this teaching there is comprehended, in brief, all of Scripture." □

SCREEN

TWO CURES

'SCENT' & 'OIL'

There is an expression we use when an actor is much greater than his or her material. The film (or play) is said to be "a vehicle" for the star. And the vehicle must be custom-built, too. Without this particular actor, the ignition wouldn't fire. The material exists only to serve and exalt an actor. There is no vision in the script, except the vision of a great performance.

Scent of a Woman is Al Pacino's vehicle, pure and simple. Bo Goldman's script is nothing but a collection of opportunities for the actor. That's the fundamental reason why it's such a lousy script.

The set-up of the action is pure pasteboard. A scholarship boy in an ultra-ultra prep school is pressured by his headmaster to rat on some of his rich schoolmates after they perpetrate a vicious joke. Betrayal will earn Charley Sims entrance to Harvard; silence will cost him any chance of upward mobility. He has a Thanksgiving weekend to ponder the choice. Charley just happens to be spending that holiday as the paid companion of a blinded ex-military man named Frank Slade. Frank coerces and cajoles the boy into accompanying him to Manhattan so that the bitter Slade, a *bon vivant* who can identify a woman's perfume with one sniff and a wine's vintage with one sip, can spend his last hours on earth savoring the joys of flesh before blowing his brains out.

Now put on your thinking caps. Guess who teaches this boy about Life. You got it. Guess whether or not Frank commits suicide. Right again. And would you like to speculate on how

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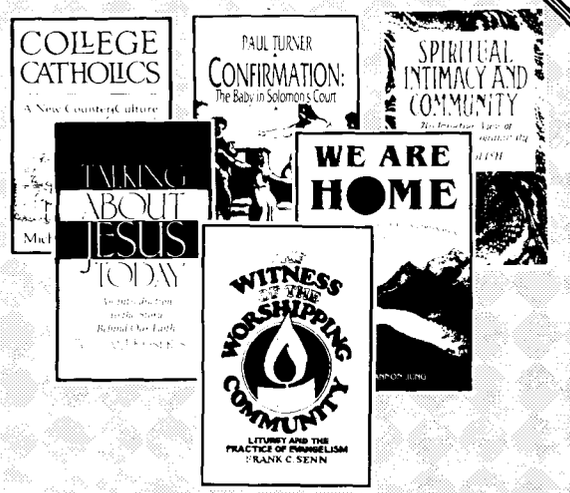

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the student body and faculty react when Father Figure Slade defends Charley against the headmaster during an unlikely school convocation? Uh huh. Zorba the Greek learns that It's a Wonderful Life during a rally of the Dead Poets Society.

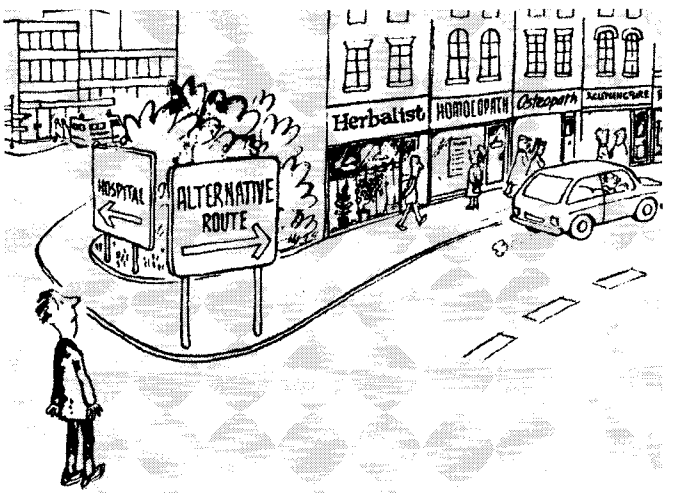
Given the machine-like predictability of the script, what an embarrassment this movie would have been if Pacino hadn't delivered the virtuosic goods. But he does. By the end of the film, we know nothing more about the human condition, but we sure know a lot more about the finely tuned acting instrument called Al Pacino.

Pacino has found not only an accent he's never used before (upper-class Southern polished to a high sheen by West Point and many hours spent drinking in the Officers Club) but an entirely new voice. It's a voice so revved up by bellowing at underlings that it can roar even when Slade is perfectly relaxed. Yet this same voice loses its charge and becomes convincingly soft and clouded when Slade gets emotionally unmoored by thoughts of his impending death. In moments of rage, Pacino's accent reverts to the streets of Brooklyn but his vocal timbre never fails him.

Pacino deftly manages the old acting trick of simulating blindness: the actor seems to be staring inside himself at some inner wall. But much more exciting and unnerving is the manic look that possesses Slade's face every so often. This man lost his sight in an accident with a grenade and, at times, it seems as if the muscles in his face were reenacting the moment of explosion.

Pacino gets everything right: the contempt for the boy that later dissolves into fatherliness; the nihilistic self-hatred that vies with Slade's pride in his military service; the dangerous physicality and the voluptuous physicality that alternately pull this man toward death, toward life. The voluptuousness is particularly well done. At one point, having received a haircut from a skilled barber, Pacino gives a quick shudder of delight as the aftershave lotion is patted on. Superb.

But what is the substance of Slade's bitterness that is activated by his accidental blinding? There is none. In this script, blindness is a substitute for characterization. And what is it in Charley Sims's character that finally stirs the better angels of Slade's nature? Nothing. Sims is only a sounding board, not a true character. And even Frank Slade isn't so much a character as a series of emotional stunts bundled under the name of "Frank Slade" and presented to Pacino as a golden Oscar opportunity.



The lousiness of *Scent of a Woman* isn't mitigated by Pacino's performance. The lousiness is a precondition of Pacino's performance. If the script weren't so shallow, Pacino wouldn't be doing a star turn (undeniably dazzling and enjoyable) but defining a human being in a real story.

Two more virtuoso performances are on display in George Miller's *Lorenzo's Oil*, but the brilliance of Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon contributes to a great enterprise, while Pacino's work *is* the enterprise.

Nolte and Sarandon play the Odones, whose little son is stricken with a disease, A.L.D., which is rare, lethal, and incurable. Frightened and outraged by how little is being done to understand this heartbreaker, the Odones become their own researchers. The title of the movie is the the outcome of their investigation: a cure for the disease that has saved many afflicted children over the last decade. Director Miller announces his theme at the beginning with a caption that quotes an African proverb that values any struggle to achieve something over the mere results. I'd be curious to know how the Odones feel about this. On the evidence of this movie, I'd guess that if they hadn't found any cure, they certainly wouldn't have felt any exaltation. They weren't striving for existentialist dignity but for success, and they found it.

But one of the thrilling things about *Lorenzo's Oil* is the way its superb script (by Miller and Nicholas Enright) doesn't confine itself to illustrating one theme but allows many connected themes to be developed in the course of the story. The limitations of sheer professionalism vs. the less informed but suppler efforts of the amateur; the contrasting responses of people similarly afflicted; the way catastrophe can both solidify and blast human relationships: these and many other human matters are more than merely touched upon by this splendid film.

But one theme could not have been realized but for those splendid performances by the lead players: how the fight against catastrophe can so marshal certain traits and energies in one's nature that the overall personality becomes unbalanced, or even seems to reverse itself.

Thus, Mrs. Odone, as played by Sarandon, is a supremely loving woman. Fiercely loving. She not only wants Lorenzo to survive but to survive on a high plane of dignity. When helpers, paid or voluntary, can't collaborate on this great enterprise at her demanding and self-demanding level, she dismisses them from the Odone ranks-of-the-faithful. (Some are glad to go.) But this abrasiveness is the byproduct of her love, and it is a high achievement of Sarandon's performance that she keeps the flame of this woman's love always visible to us, so that we remain on her side even when she offends or alarms people.

Nolte's achievement parallels Sarandon's. If his wife is fiercely loving, Odone is fiercely rational. It was his insistence

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that he and his wife explore the facts of their son's illness as if they were learning a foreign language that led to their success. Their exploit was amazing considering that neither had a medical background. (His training was economics, hers in languages and literature.) But, as he crams in libraries and networks at conferences, Odone's intensity, desperation, and lack of sleep combine to make him seem, at times, clownish, bizarre, even unhinged. Nolte never lets us forget that the center of this man is supremely reasonable even when his exterior is fraying.

George Miller could have directed his script with all the plodding literality that we see in most TV movies and *Lorenzo's Oil* still would have gripped because of its substance. But Miller has blazed this story onto the screen in short, economical segments, with each shot, each cut, each pan or dolly, every placement of light and shadow revealing the core of the episode. It's as if a master of haiku had learned how to employ his art to narrate a long novel. Just one sample: Lorenzo's nerve degeneration makes him incapable of holding a fork. In one silent scene, the camera travels around the supper table as each Odone matter-of-factly eats spaghetti with the fingers just as Lorenzo does. No verbal comment, no coy side glances to elicit heartwarmed titters from the audience, no poignant by-play or heartrending mime. Just a new turn in Lorenzo's illness and just another display of his family's solidarity.

Don't cheat yourself. See this movie. RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

A GOOD HAUL

'SOMEONE' & 'FAITH HEALER'

It is one of the platitudes of theater criticism that straight plays—selected comedies excepted—cannot survive on Broadway. Yet Frank McGuinness's *Someone Who'll Watch over Me*, which I saw in early December, is still playing. McGuinness, an Irish playwright not widely known in this country, has set his play in a basement, an improvised cell, in an unidentified country in the Middle East. As the play begins there are two prisoners—an Irishman (Stephen Rea, recently nominated for an Oscar in *The Crying Game*) and a black American (James McDaniel)—and they will be joined in the second act by an Englishman (Alec McCowen). They have apparently been picked up at random, but the playwright, more calculating than the hostage holders, has clearly selected the three men for their nationalities as well as their personalities. The Irishman is garrulous, mixing jokes and whines, a bit randy, a man who has moved around the globe seeking not only jobs but release from the confines of the domesticity he now misses. The Englishman is prim, buttoned-up, his natural standoffishness heightened by his mourning for his wife, whose death has led him to sign on as a teacher far from his comfortable English surroundings. The American, the character with whom the playwright is least comfortable, is direct, straightforward, reading the Bible, and exercising regularly in the hopes that he can keep sound in mind and body until his release.

Although the American is killed and the Irishman eventually released, leaving the Englishman crouched and alone, chained, as they all have been, to his corner of the cell, the play has very little plot. It consists of brief scenes—bridged by Ella Fitzgerald's recording of the title song—in which the three men try to survive. They quarrel with one another, often reacting less to the person alongside them than to stereotypical images that they carry in their heads; sometimes two of them join forces to attack the third; just as often, they play games together—verbal games, movie games, music games—and they share fantasies, as when the Irishman and the Englishman fly away home, taking turns spotting identifiable images on the imaginary landscape. There is something almost abstract in these survival turns as though *Someone* were a cousin of *Waiting for Godot* or an old-fashioned play dressed up in modernist clothing. It attempts to catch the horror of open-ended incarceration, isolation without the promise of escape, although the activities that the men devise to sustain themselves undermine the pain of their situation. Too much of what they say and do seems to come not from their need but from the playwright. Although the play presumably wants to make some kind of statement about the ability of men under stress to transcend their societally imposed narrowness, the essential seriousness of their situation does not rub off on the play itself. Finally, it seems to be less a dramatic presentation of an important theme than a vehicle for three

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performers. The most obvious explanation for the successful run of the play must lie in the performances of McCowen, Rea, and McDaniel. Certainly it was my appreciation of the actors not the play that I carried out of the theater last December and that has stayed with me. Three impressive performances is not a bad haul for a theatergoer.

Three good performances could be found in another Irish play recently when the People's Light and Theatre Company, one of the Philadelphia area's long-established professional companies, revived Brian Friel's 1979 play *Faith Healer*. Although Jarlath Conroy, Alda Cortese, and Tom Teti did well by the three characters who comprise the cast, it was the play that was most fascinating. It consists of four monologues, the first and the last by Frank, the titular faith healer. He is a difficult man, a drinker, an Irishman uncomfortable with his power which, as often as not, does not work but which he cannot give up. He travels through villages outside Ireland (the play begins and ends with a litany of place names), holding minuscule meetings in tiny halls, and he is accompanied (looked after) by his wife Grace, an Englishwoman who gave up her upper-class home to follow him, and by Teddy, a cockney showman who has given up dog acts and other such legitimate clients to serve as agent for Frank. The information on the characters that I give here should be taken with a soupçon of suspicion because the three first monologues contradict one another on large and small details, particularly on Grace's losing her child and on the last fatal evening when Frank returns to Ireland. What comes through is Grace's deep love for Frank although she pretends indifference to or anger at him most of the time, and Teddy's unspoken love for Grace and his devotion to Frank even as he insists that his connection with them is only a professional attachment. Frank, on the other hand, seems genuinely separate from his two would-be protectors, a man eaten by guilt, horrified by the life that he has had thrust upon him.

They all agree on his greatest triumph—a night in which he apparently cured all his audience/congregation—and on the horror of that last night. It is the details in both cases that confuse them. Having come home to Ireland, the three of them join a group of young men in the hotel bar and, after Grace and Teddy go up to their rooms, Frank, who has failed to cure a man in a wheelchair, is beaten to death by the group. Welcome home. The event drives Teddy into memory-wracked retirement and Grace to suicide. Yet when we get that last terrible night in Frank's final monologue, it is a kind of release for him. Recognizing what awaits him, he walks toward his murderers with confidence, perhaps exhilaration. He is the faith healer at last, healing himself of the darkness that he has carried with him. It might have been a triumph if it were not that his release binds Grace and Teddy more strongly to his and their pain. It is a work that resonates long after the house lights come up, teasing the departing audience with ideas about the giving, the resisting, the accepting of gifts. It is a work, too, that indicates that Friel needs neither dialogue nor shared scenes to show the attachment of characters to one another.

GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

Needed: A firm purpose of amendment

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION
Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children
Jason Berry
Doubleday, $22.50, 407 pp.

Peter Steinfels

In June 1983, a Cajun family in Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, discovered exactly what their nine-year-old son meant when he said that the pastor of the local Roman Catholic church had "a secret just between Father and the altar boys."

Two years later, the Rev. Gilbert Gauthe was sentenced to prison for sexually molesting more than thirty-five young boys. The Diocese of Lafayette and its insurers paid more than $20 million to victims for therapy and damages. The investigation ultimately implicated a score of other church workers in similar sexual offenses.

For the Catholic church nationally, Gauthe's case seemed to open a new era of widely publicized scandals, culminating, at least for now, in the case of James Porter, who has been named in criminal charges or civil suits with sexually molesting at least ninety-five children in five states between 1963 and 1974, when he left the priesthood—and already found guilty in one case occurring after his laicization.

Although the perpetrators may constitute only a tiny fraction of the Catholic clergy, the victims are far more numerous, and the impact on them as well as on the morale of other priests and on the image of the church has been highly damaging. Not even the sexual abuse of children by their parents, a much more frequent occurrence, shocks us as much as such sexual abuse by clergymen. Virtually any sort of person can become a parent; the clergyman, by contrast, has been chosen and consecrated as a representative of the sacred, a fact that makes his betrayal of trust and exploitation of authority all the more abhorrent.

The first 170 pages of this book are a nearly mesmerizing account of the case of Father Gauthe. They convey powerfully

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the climate of massive denial on the part of church authorities, the self-protective reflexes of a clerical subculture, the sticky web of conflicting demands raised by competing therapists, prosecuting and defense lawyers, attorneys for insurance companies, and parents outraged at what has happened to their children.

A Lousianan whose personal and family ties gave him an entree with bayou families, New Orleans lawyers, and Catholic priests, Jason Berry gives this story the force, the depth, the density—in short, the truth—of a novel. Moreover, the straightforward narrative structure of the opening section allows him to string side by side the contradictions and ironies, the iniquities and the ambiguities without having to force them into any explanatory grid.

The infamous Gauthe, for example, turns out to be a pathetic Milquetoast. A flamboyant Cajun lawyer for one of the victims has his private grudges to settle with the church. A secret church-connected source, code-named "Chalice," supplies Berry with the names of child-molesting priests—and later dies in prison after being convicted for sexually molesting teen-agers himself.

No story is more dizzying than that of the Rev. Michael Peterson. A lapsed Mormon who converted to Catholicism, he became a psychiatrist and researcher in sexual disorders, then sought ordination to the priesthood. A tireless source of aid and comfort to priests enslaved to alcohol or sexual pathologies, Peterson was a voice for candor and compassion, challenging the ignorance and repression about sexuality that prevailed in many church circles.

He was also living a double life of his own, telling the world that he was suffering from Hodgkin's disease rather than AIDS. It was Archbishop (now Cardinal) James Hickey of Washington, a strict defender of orthodoxy, who visited Father Peterson's sickbed daily, persuaded the priest to acknowledge his illness, and presided over his funeral with 150 white-robed priests in attendance.

When Berry moves on, in the second half of the book, to explore the overall problem of sexual abuse of minors by priests as it has surfaced across the United States and Canada, his reporting remains eye-opening but his efforts to detect causes and suggest solutions are far less compelling.

At various points Berry blames these abuses and the failures of church officials to respond compassionately to victims on the fact that priests and bishops constitute an all-male caste, lack parental experience, wield hierarchical power, operate without public scrutiny, or blind themselves to issues of sexuality. Here is an "ecclesiastical culture in decay," he argues, and the ultimate cause is the church's rule of celibacy for its priests.

This diagnosis may suit today's ideals of egalitarianism and full sexual expression. But Berry is also willing to make the politically incorrect charge that the celibate priesthood has become the reserve of a growing number of homosexuals, some of whom have created a gay clerical subculture, sexually active, frequently preda-

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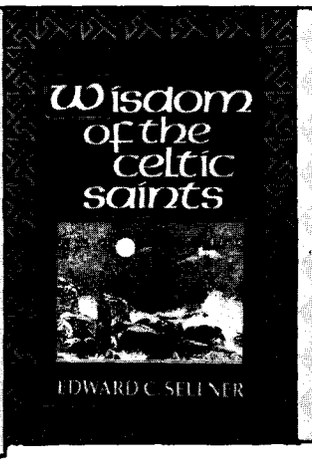

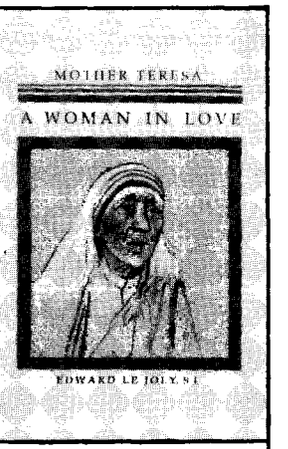

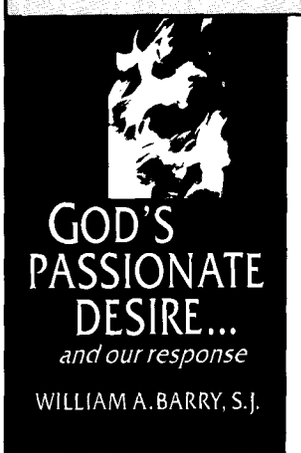

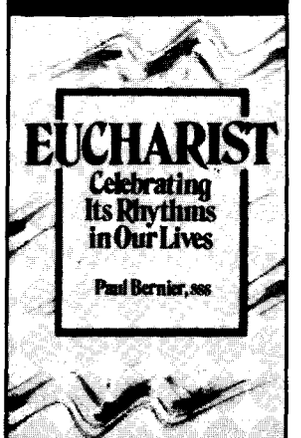

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"But this is ridiculous. We can't all be investigative journalists."

tory, and too compromised by the violation of priestly vows to be anything but tolerant of sexual misdeeds with minors.

These explanations are provocative, but are they true? Berry's accumulation of court testimony, anecdote, rumor, and opinion is too imposing to dismiss them, and yet too unsystematic to test them.

Nowhere, for example, does the book provide something as elementary as an orderly examination of what is known and still not known about sexual attraction to minors, the categories researchers and therapists use, the range of misconduct and of impact on victims, the current modes of treatment and evidence about their effectiveness. Nowhere does the book carefully compare the church's record with the experiences of other institutions, like school systems and the Boy Scouts, other professions, like psychology and medicine, and other religious groups with married, female, or nonhierarchical clergies. These matters are discussed in passing if at all, inserted into the flow of sordid revelations, always subordinated to Berry's own interpretations.

Nowhere, in a book citing offenses committed over three decades, is there a clear presentation of how society and the church have shifted in understanding these matters. Nowhere does Berry report on a case in which a priest was wrongly accused, nor does he even appear to imagine such a possibility.

In two instances, this writer has interviewed some of the same people and read the same testimony as Berry. I would not contradict Berry's conclusions but only say that he is far more certain about them than I could be.

Two subthemes wind throughout the book. One is the media's role in exposing sexual abuse. The media have been accused, and rightly in some cases, of sensationalizing this story. For reasons both good and bad, the Catholic church has become a symbol of traditional restraints on the libido. Certainly the church is a leading advocate of a strict code of sexual conduct. That makes the sexual deviations of its celibate clergy hard to set aside as not newsworthy and easy to report in muckracking tones.

At the same time, Berry's experience shows how often the media have been reluctant to report what it knows will incense Catholic readers and nervous advertisers. More, not less, reporting might have served the church well at an early stage in this scandal.

The second subtheme is the author's own struggle, as a committed Catholic, to maintain some religious equanimity in the face of the ugly deeds he repeatedly confronted. There is a depth of moral outrage that both informs and at points deforms this book, but that was probably essential to its writing.

This book should be read by all Catholics in leadership positions—and by anyone still tempted to dismiss this problem as a media creation or simply "a few rotten apples" whose presence in the ranks of the priesthood needs no further explanation. □

A PRELATE'S PERSPECTIVE

FAITH AND THE HUMAN ENTERPRISE
A Post-Vatican II Vision
Rembert G. Weakland
Orbis Books, $14.95, 168 pp.

Dennis M. Doyle

Recently I was part of a large gathering of theologians, mainly Catholic, who were honoring Milwaukee's Archbishop Rembert Weakland. In his address, the archbishop shared with us several personal stories that touched upon subjects ranging from his background in music to his hopes and dreams for the church. The standing ovation that he received was not only enthusiastic; it was intense and impassioned. It was a rare instance of what is possible when an apostolic leader expresses and embodies a vision that harmonizes with the prevailing convictions and experiences of moderate-to-liberal theologians in the U.S.

Such a moment of enthusiasm (though I am sure there were some among us who were not so moved) inevitably leads to moments of critical reflection. The appearance of *Faith and the Human Enterprise*, a collection of the archbishop's talks and articles written over the last decade, offers such an opportunity. The essays offer sustained intellectual argument and reflection, with a surprising scarcity of personal stories or specific examples. This is a rather heady book, not for those in search of feel-good homilies.

Many chapters discuss the writing and reception of "Economic Justice for All" (1986), the U.S. bishops' pastoral for which Weakland served as the committee chair. These pieces, along with some material on religion and public policy, form the heart of the book. Opening and closing chapters on Vatican II and the current state of the church provide a framework.

Although there is some unavoidable repetition, the material on the economic pastoral reveals Weakland at his best. Here his concern for the poor balances off his penchant for abstract analysis. His prophetic righteousness is itself balanced

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We Catholics have nothing to be ashamed of if we are concerned about the poor.... We have only to be ashamed if we take no steps to find answers, if we permit ourselves to be frightened by the magnitude of the question, if we turn our backs on the poor and forget them as we go about our own mediocre lives, if we are scared off by those with jealously guarded positions of power.

—Rembert Weakland
Faith and the Human Experience

by his evident capacity to listen to criticism and to make necessary adjustments. The archbishop treats those who have a serious interest in the pastoral letter to an in-depth analysis of its historical development. He also discusses its scriptural underpinnings, its connection with the principles of Catholic social teaching, its reflection of—and yet challenge to—U.S. culture, its troubled marriage between Enlightenment and Catholic ideals, and its reception in the third world. He even gives his own frank assessment of the letter's many limitations

His essays on the pastoral alone make this a valuable volume. What is more immediately topical, however, are the framing chapters concerning Vatican II and the church. Many will read the archbishop's work as the antithesis to *The Ratzinger Report* (Ignatius, 1985). Indeed, Weakland cites the book-length interview with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, several times, making clear his distance from the cardinal's efforts toward "restoration" and opposition to the modern world.

Yet some underlying similarities between Ratzinger and Weakland are worth noting. Each offers the reader access to the ideological moorings of a high-ranking official within the Catholic church. Each represents a popular but controversial school of thought. Each exhibits the benefits of contemporary scholarship without being primarily scholarly. Each easily lends itself to lavish praise from devotees and to harsh criticism from opponents. And each laments many elements of the present state of the church and seeks a solution to the church's current dilemmas in renewed attention to the documents of Vatican II.

This last similarity, in my mind, is an important one, in that it highlights how deeply both of these leaders remain part of the same church in the same period of history. When one asks precisely how the documents of Vatican II are to be interpreted and implemented, however, the only remaining similarity between these men seems to be that each wears a Roman collar.

Of the sixteen documents of Vatican II, Weakland quotes most frequently from the socially progressive "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et spes*). He wholeheartedly endorses Karl Rahner's naming of Vatican II's most defining achievement as the church becoming truly a world church, inculturating the gospel in diverse ways throughout the globe. The archbishop consistently emphasizes the most socially progressive elements of the documents, such as the political dimensions of the church's mission, social justice, ecumenism, dialogue with world religions, religious liberty, collegiality, and the common priesthood of the faithful. He lauds the image of the church as the "People of God." He believes that interpretation of the council must go beyond the documents themselves to take further developments into account.

In other words, Weakland interprets the council as having established certain principles and set in motion certain forces in a definite trajectory. Church teachings need to be appropriated and applied within the framework of contemporary concerns. In these presuppositions he finds the grounds for championing progress in matters such as decentralizing decision making in the church and advancing the role of women.

Ratzinger, in contrast, interprets the most progressive change at the council as the renewed affirmation of the mystery of the church. The cardinal accepts other progressive changes, but he subordinates them to this new focus on mystery, which includes an emphasis on essential church structures that represent the will of Christ. He subordinates Weakland's preferred image of the People of God to images that

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highlight the Christological nature of the church, such as the Body of Christ. Ratzinger frequently cites the text of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*), rarely *Gaudium et spes* which Weakland so favors. For the cardinal, the documents are to be read anew apart from what he sees as one-sided developments falsely linked to the spirit of the council.

And so there does remain another similarity between the archbishop and the cardinal: each assesses the interpretation of the other to be one-sided. Weakland remarks that Ratzinger's agenda "seems to be inspired by the desire to turn back the clock, not to the pre-Vatican II period, but to the texts themselves, as if there had been no development since then, to interpret them in the light of only one side of the debate during the council itself, and to begin the implementation all over again, but in a controlled and highly centralized way." Similarly, one might find an anticipation of Weakland's approach in many of Ratzinger's laments concerning dubious progressive interpretations of the council.

In mutual accusations of one-sidedness there is room for hope, because each acknowledges, at least implicitly, that there is more than one side, and that all sides need to be taken into account. In Weakland's favor, he seems more inclined than Ratzinger to admit this explicitly. And so I continue my applause for the archbishop, though perhaps somewhat tempered by the awareness of a world Catholicism that offers many contending approaches to Vatican II. Weakland's approach is particular, selective, and one-sided; but oh, what a side! □

IS THERE A MINISTER IN THE HOUSE?

ARE ALL CHRISTIANS MINISTERS?
John N. Collins
The Liturgical Press, $11.95, 168 pp.

Robert P. Imbelli

Among the remarkable developments in post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism, one of the most remarkable is the transmutation of the notion of "ministry." From a word that was hardly employed before the council—save to refer somewhat suspiciously to Protestant "ministers"—it has become almost universally invoked and applied to a seemingly endless variety of pastoral services and activities, whether directed to "church" or "world." This "paradigm shift" in the use of the term "ministry," whereby it has come to signify a universal function constitutive of and incumbent upon all the baptized, would lead many to respond spontaneously to the title of John Collins's book, *Are All Christians Ministers?*, with a heart-felt "Yes!" By contrast, the author's signal contribution to a discussion desperately in need of theological critique lies in his careful examination of the New Testament evidence which leads him to respond with a provocative "No!"

Collins argues that our current situation, in which the notion of ministry has been extended rather indiscriminately, has been promoted in part by questionable translations of key New Testament texts. He acknowledges the enthusiasm this extension has generated and the energies it has released. Yet, while indulging no revisionist reveries, Collins submits the development to a searching examination in the light and by the norm of the New Testament usage upon which it pretends to depend. For there the term, formed from the Greek root *diakon-* (whence the theological note of *diakonia* or the ecclesial office of *deacon*), refers not to generic, humble, often social-oriented service (a prevalent and rhetorically influential misconstrual today), but to authoritative proclamation and mediation of the saving event that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Collins illuminates his fundamental contention by a nuanced description both of the Hellenistic background and the actual New Testament employment of the terms. He holds, for example, that in Acts of the Apostles 6, the Seven are not commissioned to serve at table as lowly functionaries, but authoritatively to minister the Word, according to the apostolic mandate, to those at table. Their task is not social service, but proclamation and instruction as Stephen and Philip's subsequent actions manifest, where they appear as authoritative proclaimers of God's Word of judgment and salvation.

Collins further proposes that, in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul differentiates between "ministries" and "activities." These are not equivalent concepts. Though both embody God's gift to the church and hence are "charismatic," ministries entail a specific and indispensable role of teaching and discernment within the community. Ministries thus promote the church's

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good order and upbuilding in Christ: for "the body will perform only as well as it is educated." Poor teaching makes for a slack body; false teaching for a dysfunctional one.

Finally, he insists that in Ephesians 4:11-13, the author, as the classic theological tradition has maintained, describes the work proper to *ministry* as one whereby men and women "equipped the saints and nurtured them to maturity in knowledge and love." As Collins himself puts it: "A minister is one appointed to the task, and in this instance the task is that of providing believers with the teaching which sustains them in faith and knowledge....When we late twentieth-century Christians turn [the author of Ephesians] word into a nondescript service within the capacity of any believer, we gravely distort his meaning." Ministers, therefore, stand both within and "over against" the body of believers.

The outcome of Collins's study is to delineate a specific identity to ministry: one that is more expansive and accessible than its restriction in pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism to "priesthood;" yet not so inclusive as to surrender all differentiation among the baptized members of Christ's body. He recognizes, with some bemusement, that such assertions risk appearing "reactionary" in an ecclesial and theological climate more given to correct slogans than to discriminating investigations. Yet the thrust of his analysis moves beyond hardened institutional polarizations to recover the radical newness of the New Testament vision. For the work of ministry in the early church "supposed a profoundly religious engagement with the Christian mystery, and was named ministry by virtue of this engagement." Surely no less is required today.

A noteworthy feature of Collins's study is its implicit recognition that reflection upon the specificity of ministry proceeds from a wider Christological and ecclesiological vision. What we understand ministry to be about depends upon whom we consider Jesus Christ to be and what we deem the nature and purpose of Christ's church to be.

A merely moralistic view of Christ or a utilitarian approach to church necessarily impoverishes the sense of Christian ministry, leveling it down to a least common denominator assimilation to what any concerned citizen would undertake. Whereas a scripturally inspired engagement with the mystery of the world's salvation in Christ and a whole-hearted adherence to the church as sacrament, celebrant, and witness of that salvation promotes a sense of ministry conscious of its immense dignity and responsibility. Such ministry is authoritative, not because of its office-holder, but because it derives from the Lord who commissions and serves as living norm of its exercise; to whom, ultimately, all ministers must render an account of their stewardship.

As the "paradigm shift" in Roman Catholic theology of ministry proceeds apace, this stimulating essay will help bring clarity and depth to a debate often deprived of both. It may even help to advance the ardent hope that Coleridge, in other circumstances, thought vital. "Great good, therefore, of such a revolution that alters not by exclusion, but by an enlargement....that includes the former, though it places it in a new point of view." □

FAITHFUL TO THE FATHER

OPUS DEI
An Investigation into the Secret Society Struggling for Power within the Roman Catholic Church
Michael Walsh
HarperSanFrancisco, $18.95, 230 pp.

Paul E. Dinter

In July 1941, Cardinal Pedro Segura of Seville wrote to the papal nuncio in Madrid, replying to his queries about Opus Dei. In his letter he mused about his ignorance of the group and how the rigorously secret character of the organization had frustrated his investigations. As a result, he had to confess ignorance as to whether Opus Dei's work was political, social, or apostolic, but he professed little confidence in the group since it seemed to be adopting methods that were alien to the tradition of the church.

This vignette is but one example of the genuine investigative work that Michael Walsh has carried out in writing of the history, operations, and ecclesiastical shenanigans of Opus Dei and its newly beatified founder, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y Albas. To me, as a university chaplain for fifteen years, Opus Dei's secretive and highly dubious methods had clearly made them seem like a cult operating within the Catholic church. Walsh's study corroborates my experience and validates my fears about an organization that has been juridically engrafted into the Body of Christ since 1982.

Defenders of this ecclesiastical hybrid often cite the "correct" relations that Opus Dei maintains with the Catholic hierarchy as evidence that it operates above board and that its work has the approbation of the Vatican. But Walsh's investigation reveals that there is a strategy at work behind this correctness (as well as its hyperorthodoxy). Opus Dei seems to be intent on remaking Catholicism in the image of Escrivá and his spiritualized bourgeois authoritarianism. Walsh's readers will find plenty of reason to ignore the book's minor repetitions and awkward translation from Spanish originals, and to thank its author for ferreting out the source documents and minimal "paper trail" that this secretive society has allowed into the public eye. Piecing together material from Opus Dei's publications, from an anonymously donated copy of their 1982 constitution, and from stories of a few higher-up defectors, Walsh traces the anomalies in the organization to its founder.

Walsh gives a far more objective portrait of the founder and the "Catholic" sect he left behind than emerges in Opus Dei's own hagiographies. Though Escrivá is a man who labeled "honors, distinctions, ti-

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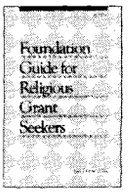

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tles, things of air, puffs of pride, lies, nothingness," he petitioned Franco's government in 1968, and was granted the title of Marques of Peralta. During his life, he laid plans for his own canonization. He insisted that his followers claim their financial just due from their professional work, but discouraged almsgiving, recommending instead the "apostolate of not giving." He repeatedly claimed that there was nothing secret about Opus Dei, while seeking permission from the Vatican to withhold its entire constitution from bishops in whose dioceses its members were working. That 1950 document (most of which remained in force after Opus Dei was made a "personal prelature" in 1982) enjoined secrecy on Opus Dei members, forbade their speaking to nonmembers about whether they themselves belonged to the institute, and recommended that young recruits not divulge their membership to parents.

The secrecy that Walsh chronicles has allowed Opus Dei to maintain an aura of "chosenness." In the mid-eighties, two college students who had joined up were furious with my contention that they were not members of the "personal prelature" as such. The Code of Canon Law is "unequivocal" in its restriction of membership to deacons and priests. The two wouldn't believe that they were just ordinary lay folk. But, the clerical leadership of Opus Dei constantly touts it as an organization that pre-empted Vatican II's rehabilitation of the laity. The claim is disingenuous because, beneath the veneer of lay leadership, the *prelature* is exactly that: an organization in which the clergy are *preferred.*

But lack of candor is woven into the very nature of Opus Dei. Escrivá, whose 999 Maxims are one of Walsh's sources, was convinced during the anticlerical days of the Spanish Republic that Catholicism could be saved only by those willing to practice "holy intransigence, holy coercion, holy shamelessness." Armed with that code, he decided to fill the vacuum created by the removal of the church from public life with *caudillaje*, his unquestioned leadership. Walsh's interpretive reading of Escrivá's sayings might be charged with taking them out of context. But in fact, following their leader, Opus Dei presents them as nothing less than timeless.

In this, they are only obeying the founder, who taught that the organization was given by God and, hence, beyond historical context: "as long as there are men on earth, there will be Opus Dei...it is holy, unchangeable, and everlasting." Opus Dei has canonized the ecclesiology of the early twentieth century and considers itself a "perfect society," one that possesses all the means necessary to achieve its God-given purpose. It has adopted all the authoritarian trappings to boot: an absolute leader, a timeless law, a hierarchical structure with more ranks than the army, and with women in secondary roles.

Both before Vatican II and since, Rome has bent the rules to allow Opus Dei to function, contravening the law that disallows women's religious institutes from being dependent on their male equivalents. Its excessive clericalism makes the Vatican comfortable, perhaps because of the "devotion" which its members profess to their bishops and to the pope most especially. But, Walsh argues, the sectarian nature of Opus Dei gives it a distinctly "Calvinistic outlook." He also notes that some observers see the organization "falling into the error of Pelagianism," of "believing that, with the guidance of the founder's wisdom, they can attain sanctity by their own efforts." While it goes through the motions of being obedient, Opus Dei is seeking to use institutional Catholicism for its own ends. Though presenting themselves as hyper-Catholics, they have set out to "save the church by...faithfulness to the Father," that is, Escrivá, not God. Yet their fetishizing of "rigid dogma," a product, perhaps, of Spain in the 1930s, when organized into a timeless religious system, cannot seem anything other than a deformed Catholicism. Arguing this point, Walsh contends that, based on Opus Dei's "rules and regulations, its censorship, its control of the minutiae of its members' day-to-day living, its class-related structures, its association with elites of wealth and power...it is not merely, as a sect, less than Catholic. It is less than Christian." To this reviewer, it is a well-argued point in a well-documented work. □

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THIRSTY PEOPLE

SPRINGS OF WATER IN A DRY LAND
Spiritual Survival for Catholic Women Today
Mary Jo Weaver
Beacon Press, $22, 133 pp.

Jane Redmont

Mary Jo Weaver's *Springs of Water in a Dry Land* addresses a problem the author has wrestled with for years: "how to respond constructively to the anguish of Catholic women who can no longer define themselves in traditional terms but who cannot bring themselves to leave their church behind."

Weaver's *New Catholic Women*, published in 1985, analyzed the contemporary U.S. Catholic women's movement with insight and skill. In it Weaver responded to the tension between "religious studies professionals...not prepared to take feminists seriously" and "feminists...all too eager to dismiss religious belief and practice not related to the Goddess as irrelevant or pernicious." Is there for "new Catholic women" unwilling to bear the constraints of a patriarchal church a source of nourishment in the tradition of this church? Must they either leave the church on their own terms or stay in on others' terms? Should the question be framed as this either/or dilemma, or is there another way of defining the experience and the religious decisions of Catholic feminists?

Weaver's own spiritual life, as she describes it, is "full of apparent contradictions, nourished both by feminist criticism of Catholic Christian tradition and by the tradition's spiritual classics." Stubbornly rooted in history, historical evidence, and historical consciousness, Weaver always returns to her love of the Western classical Christian tradition, particularly Augustine, Dante, and Teresa of Avila. "Whenever I search for God in the modern world," she confesses, "I end up in the medieval world."

The problem, for Weaver and for the women for whom and to whom she speaks, is that the Catholic church has ceased to foster quiet communion with the divine Presence. The image of spiritual homelessness pervades Weaver's first chapter. The images and metaphors she finds in the tradition and uses in her theological and spiritual work are spatial—homelessness, journey, desert, quest. "We suffer," she writes, "because we try to fit our spiritual aspirations into a space that is more restrictive and less magnificent than we know to be true."

Springs is a loosely knit collection of six essays written over a period of half a dozen years. The essays include analyses of the Grail movement in its fiftieth year in the United States and of the neopagan Goddess movement, two chapters on spirituality, an examination of feminist spirituality's relationship to process theology, and a version of a speech Weaver gave in 1985 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the first U.S. conference on the ordination of women.

This chapter, though it offers no new information to readers familiar with the women's ordination and Women-Church movements, is the most institutionally provocative. Women, Weaver writes, have no hope of being ordained "in the Catholic church as we know it today....It is time," she adds "to stop dreaming that 'they' will do something for us or that the priest shortage will work on women's behalf." Nor does Weaver believe women ought to be ordained into the priesthood as it currently exists in the Roman Catholic church; this would, she argues, be good neither for the women nor for the People of God, who need to work for a much deeper transformation of institution.

Weaver does not mince her words. "First of all," she warns, "we must refuse to shore up the patriarchal church. We must let the old system die....It is time to quit

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fooling ourselves about our 'ministry' when it means we are permitted to do the work but have no power to change things. It is time to quit being 'Father's helper' in a church that considers women unfit to celebrate the Eucharist." Like other theologians identified with Women-Church, Weaver encourages women to "minister on their own terms" and to celebrate the Eucharist openly "as part of their heritage within Catholicism." Quoting Rosemary Ruether's words at the ordination conference, Weaver calls Catholics, and especially Catholic women, to, "demystify the power of the priesthood," locating sacramental power in the believing community. Weaver addresses her remarks not only to women who experience a call to the ordained ministry, but to the many more for whom church has become an experience of cognitive dissonance, who have come to a point "where the old system does not make sense any more."

Weaver refuses to accept the popular dichotomy between leaving the church on one's own terms or staying on others' terms. Many Catholic women today—especially those identified with Women-Church—stay on their own terms, claiming the center rather than assenting to a definition of their position as "marginal." They—and Weaver—are quick to stress the distinction between abandoning patriarchy and leaving the church.

"The Catholic church, including those who seek ordination, must refuse to abide by the current limitations of that church while actively celebrating the mysteries made available to us from the tradition," Weaver writes. "If the Roman Catholic church will not 'grant' ordination to women, then perhaps they have to find their own ways to respond to God's invitation by courageous acts and daring refusals." Underlying Weaver's call to "courageous acts and daring refusals" is her belief in "a divine being whose *modus operandi* is disturbing the peace and calling us to new life."

Weaver also urges women called to ordination to place their gifts at the service of the growing number of Catholic women who no longer find spiritual sustenance in their parishes but identify themselves as Catholics and hunger for the sacramental life. Weaver does not address the relationship between Catholic women and the men who are their allies and peers, nor what the options are for women who reject patriarchy yet are committed to living and worshiping with communities of both women and men.

"Who is the Goddess and Where Does She Get Us?" is Weaver's strongest chapter. "Neopaganism and Utopian Poetics" is the most valuable from a scholarly perspective; and helpful in much the same way as *New Catholic Women*. After summarizing the history of the Goddess movement and Goddess scholarship of the past two decades, Weaver asks a series of questions about the relationship between text-based, historical traditions and movements based on nonliterate sources and utopian visions, on the nature and use of the male God symbol, and on the role of personal autobiography in one's choices about religious authority. Her essay, based on a decision to treat neopaganism "with the same kind of reverent attention I brought to any other spiritual reality," is a helpful corrective for those who either dismiss or hastily condemn the Goddess movement and the current, even broader neopagan revival.

Springs of Water has serious structural problems. There is overlap and repetition among the essays, and even within the essays themselves, giving the reader the impression of a hastily constructed book and the sense that Weaver was not well served by her editors. Many of the points Weaver makes late in the book would be more helpful early on; she waits till the third to last page to point out the diversity of Catholic women's religious autobiographies and the impossibility of speaking of "a spirituality of Catholic women." The "act of faith" of Weaver's final essay could have had a stronger impact if placed frankly at the beginning of the book with other reflections locating Weaver's spiritual and ecclesial experience, followed by an assessment of Catholic women's experiences and by Weaver's historical and theological assessment. Or Weaver might have begun the book with an image she uses in the epilogue, the story of the small nuns' chapel tucked away in a corner of a large seminary, and moved from there into using many of the spatial metaphors she favors.

Springs is a hybrid book unsure of its own identity, part intellectual analysis, part loosely connected personal reflections, not quite a spiritual handbook. It serves as a window into one theologian's heart and mind, but not as the comprehensive resource suggested by its title. Weaver's yearning, her struggle toward hope, and her intellectual honesty add warmth and depth to her academic analysis and prosaic language. The reader emerges full of respect for the author, but disappointed in the book. □

REVIEWERS

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AN EARTHQUAKE IN SLOW MOTION

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTARS
Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580
Eamon Duffy
Yale University Press, $45, 654 pp.

Edward T. Oakes

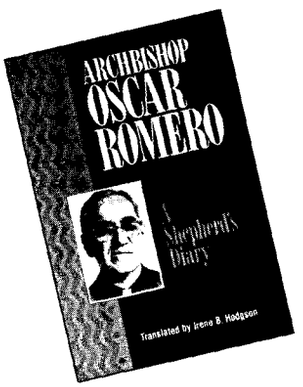
One of the more amusing, if entirely inconsequential, disputes in the history of scholarship is the debate over whether Shakespeare was a Catholic or an Anglican. What keeps this little contretemps all a-boil is not just the dearth of biographical details about the Bard, but also Shakespeare's own protean imagination: why are friars so sympathetically portrayed in his plays? Oh? say the skeptics: then what means the antipapal tone of *King John*? But, the other side says, don't forget the sympathetic treatment of Catherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII*!

A fit subject for one of Alexander Pope's mock epics, perhaps, but otherwise hardly worth wasting much ink or energy over. But while I was reading Eamon Duffy's fascinating book on the revolution in religion that swept through England before and through the first part of Shakespeare's life, this peculiar little debate kept coming to mind—and above all, that haunting line from one of his sonnets (no. 73): "Bare, ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang." One renowned Shakespeare scholar, Philip Edwards, the King Alfred Professor at the University of Liverpool, says of that line and this debate: "If that line, in context, does not express sadness about the course which the juggernaut of history had taken in England in the sixteenth century, poetry is a mere rhapsody of words."

And that line is also clearly the best way of summarizing the main point of Duffy's vast and teeming book: what Shakespeare penned in just that one, five-beat line sums up, for Duffy, the attitude of the vast majority of the English people toward the reform of the liturgy under Thomas Cranmer, Henry VIII's loyal archbishop of Canterbury. The book setting out this daring argument is almost crushingly large, but as the reader begins the plunge, it soon becomes clear why Duffy must bear down on the reader with such relentless overkill. This is a work of revisionist history so daring, so innately interesting, so rich in admonitory tales for today, so against the grain of received wisdom, that only a full lawyer's brief would suffice to establish its thesis.

Duffy leaves no aspect of his difficult case, it seems, to the hunches and surmises of his putative jury. All is laid out, everything is argued: exhibits are properly labeled, witnesses duly subpoenaed and cross-examined, all to drive home this single point: that the Roman-affiliated church in England from 1400-1580 was *not* the decadent branch of corrupt priestcraft and popular superstition so beloved of the conventional wisdom of historians, a church that was nearly ready to fall off, needing only the pruning shears of the Reformers.

Duffy sets out his case in two parts. The first deals with the fifteenth century and surveys (what seems like all) the evidence about popular attitudes toward the institutions of Roman Christianity throughout the land of England. Among his startling conclusions can be listed the following: there was close lay engagement with the structures of the Roman church; the liturgy was widely understood even though it was in Latin; there was an inner harmony between the reading habits generated by the printing press and the devotions encouraged by the clergy; and the medieval doctrines of Christian eschatology were almost universally accepted.



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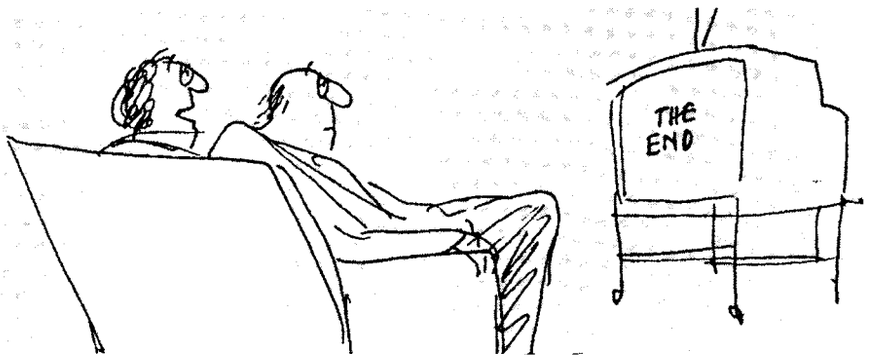
What then caused the break with tradition and how did it succeed, seemingly so effortlessly? This constitutes the second part, and here again we encounter revisionist history at its most imaginative and exciting. Duffy massively documents a widespread opposition, across all social classes, to Protestantism during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. He then goes on to show how far and how fast Queen Mary moved to reestablish the *ancien régime*, and how she was on the verge of succeeding before her death. And only with Elizabeth's systematic dismantling of parochial Catholicism were the people robbed of that necessary oxygen that makes Christian sacramental life possible. The book ends at 1580, so the role of Spain's diplomatic machinations, not to mention Guy Fawkes, is perhaps not given its rightful due. And although Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570, this too is ignored, rather to the detriment of Duffy's thesis, though he makes clear that both before and after 1570, "dislike of change, Catholic instincts, hope for a speedy restoration of the old ways, and Tudor thrift, combined to struggle against the instinctive obedience of well-schooled subjects, in a conflict not strong enough for resistance, but which ensured widespread inertia and concealment."

Another remarkable feature of the book is the combination of skills which Duffy has marshaled to establish his thesis. Part 1 is written more or less in the *Annales* school of historiography, patiently assembling the relatively "silent" evidence of wills, tombstones, mnemonic lyrics used to teach catechism to the unlettered, etc., while part 2 is narrative history at its most thrilling. Seeing the transformation of English Catholicism from Henry's first inklings of disquiet over the lack of a male heir to the final Elizabethan settlement under the Cranmer thumb is like watching an earthquake in slow motion. One moment, the world is at peace, and all and sundry are going about their business, and suddenly (as history measures these things), the landscape has been completely transformed, and not a stone is left atop another.



"Well, eventually, everything comes to an end."

Judging by the ample photographs accompanying the text, this metaphor, it seems, can also be taken literally. The sheer amount of destruction of statues and frescoes—heads and hands lopped off, choir stalls vandalized, paintings defaced (including one of Christ's Scourging at the Pillar, a particularly ironic desecration)—forms a kind of Greek chorus to the text, showing how relentless the destructive power of the iconoclastic temper could be. (The $45 price might seem steep until one realizes that the book has 654 pages, not including the glossy inserts of 141 photographs intercalated throughout part 1.)

The publisher's blurb on the dust-jacket claims that this study will be of interest not just to specialists of the time but to any student of religion—a rare example of understatement for a dust cover. For the book does indeed show just how fragile institutional Christianity can be in the face of determined opposition from the powers that be. One need only think of, for example, the policy of the shoguns in Japan in the seventeenth century, or the disappearance of Christianity in North Africa outside of Egypt after the advent of Islam. Or, on a much more minor scale, some of the liturgical reforms after Vatican II.

Longtime readers of *Commonweal* might recall (now Appeals Court Judge) John Noonan's article several years back lamenting the pedestrian translations of the Bible now used in Catholic services. He particularly bemoaned the phrase "and there was no room for them at the place where travellers lodge" (instead of the traditional "there was no room for them at the inn"). Not only does this weird circumlocution substitute a clumsy phrase for a perfectly suitable English term, but it also cannot help but conjure up the motel chain Travellers' Lodge, with its logo of a Teddy Bear in PJ's.

One's position on specific texts can vary, of course. My small point, a familiar one, is that we have now raised a generation of Catholics who have no sense of the cadence of biblical prose. Why was it assumed that only the most demotic and colloquial English would serve the needs of the faithful? How much American Catholics were in fact starving for more Madison Avenue English in the liturgy is a question that, among many others, one cannot help asking after concluding this astonishing and magnificent piece of work. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

It's good to be human—and to be God's sons and daughters....it's overwhelming!

Feliz Navidad a ti y Prospero Año Nuevo a Commonweal.

CAMILLUS THIBAULT, A.A

It doesn't add up

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Professor Raymo's review of *Pi in the Sky* [January 29] demonstrates how positivism and scientism continue to permeate our culture. To write that "[t]oday, our most secure knowledge of the world is mathematical" undermines the security of our directly lived experience of the world, upon which the security of all the sciences ultimately depends. Unwittingly, the supremacy attributed to mathematics denigrates all other domains of knowledge and relegates them to the category "subjective."

Professor Raymo's parody of theology and his proposal for a mathematical corrective remind me as a psychologist of Rieff's *Triumph of the Therapeutic*, a critique of the contemporary penchant to collapse all categories of knowledge into the psychological. Mathematics provides us with a most denuded reality, a world stripped of its rich texture and varied qualities. When Raymo writes, "We ourselves are mathematics incarnate—to the core of our beings," it sounds like an oxymoron. To make such a claim, he must bypass the abstract nature of his discipline.

DAVID L. SMITH

Broyard's way

Red Bank, N.J.

To the Editors: I am sure that others besides myself were taken aback by the vehemence of Madeline Marget's criticism [January 15] of Anatole Broyard's handling of his fatal disease in his book *Intoxicated by My Illness*.

Perhaps Marget has had personal experience with terminal cancer that caused her to react in this way. My own experience makes me look to Broyard for guidance. I am dying—albeit slowly—of prostate cancer and doing it in my own fashion, just as Broyard did in his. In many ways I resemble him. I am a writer. What friends I have are wits. I have people who feel grateful for my writings and wish to do something in return. What I wish I had is Broyard's enormous politeness, his consideration of others, and his sense of humor.

I find it very difficult to see Broyard as Marget described him: "supercilious, superficial, and affected." But if a Boston policeman can call Robert Coles "arrogant," no one can be sensitive enough to be certain he is not goring someone's ox.

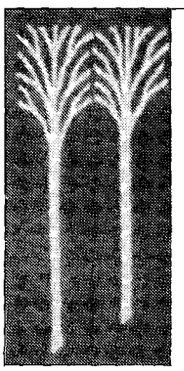
GEORGE SHEEHAN, M.D.

Ghetto? What ghetto?

Benicia, Calif.

To the Editors: David Carlin's column on Catholic education ["From Ghetto to Hilltop," February 12] makes a few assumptions about American Catholics that are narrow to the point of distorting reality.

HEARING WOMEN SPEAK



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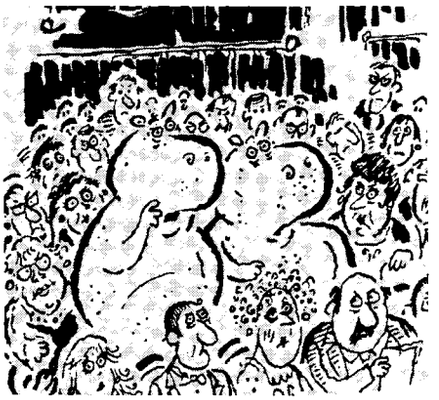
First, he talks about Catholic ghettos, presumably urban since they were large enough to support institutions, and assumes that we all had our roots there.

But there was, and is, a group of American Catholics whose roots are not in the city, who lived, and live, in the country. Like my parents, and grandparents, and great-grandparents, they lived, died, and are buried in small-town America. They liked it there, it felt like home because it was home, and they didn't feel out of place. They helped to build, they taught in, they administered, and they sent their children to the public schools. And they looked to the public schools not only by necessity, since there were no Catholic schools, but also by choice. They looked to the parish priest only for the sacraments. They were smart enough to dismiss most of the talk that came from the pulpit, and all the talk that came from the Boss Tweeds in Roman collars who ran the urban chanceries.

Some were, like me, Irish in name. But they were not consciously "Irish Catholic," except when it came to choosing spouses. For the most part, they had no desire to be anything other than small-town American Catholics. They, and I, went to state or private universities—again by choice, thinking them to be the best. They did not make use of the Catholic schools in the cities because their urban, ethnic quality felt so foreign.



"We seem to be the only hippos here!"

Second, Mr. Carlin's assumption that Catholics "generally" are connected with Catholic educational institutions is incorrect. According to a study conducted by the National Catholic Education Association a few years back, more than 50 percent of American Catholics have had no formal religious education at all. Catholics involved in Catholic institutions other than the parish church are a minority. The institutions most Catholics are connected with are civil and secular. For some of us, that is neither a problem nor an anomaly. We feel no nostalgia for an urban ghetto because we did not know it. Recognizing that we are called to be countercultural, we see no particular benefit in supporting a Catholic counterculture we didn't experience and do not prize.

DAVID K. O'ROURKE, O.P.

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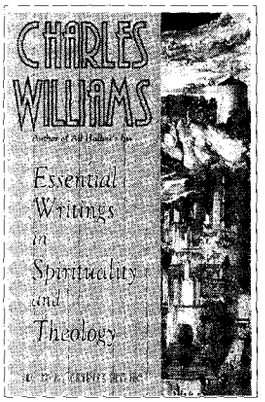

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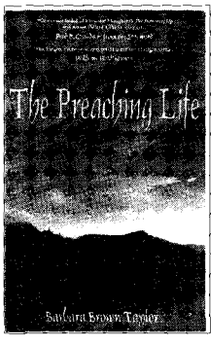

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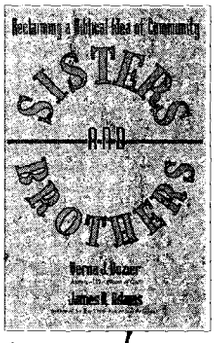

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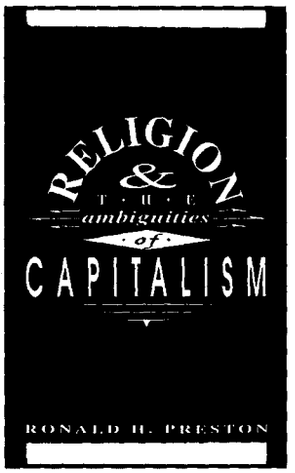

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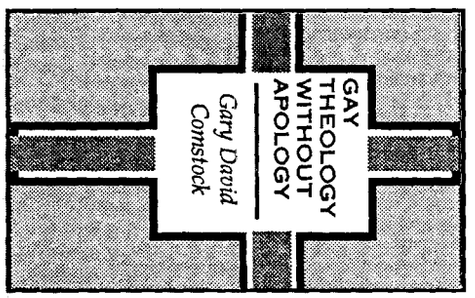

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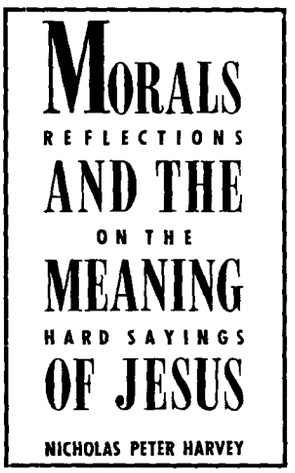

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